



Memorandum

DATE: Nov. 19, 2015

TO: Mayor Mitchell & City Councilmembers Navarro, Arredondo-Savage and Granville

FROM: Nikki Ripley, Communication and Media Relations Manager, x8846

THROUGH: Andrew Ching, City Manager, x8844

SUBJECT: Branding/Communication Council Committee RFP Update

The last meeting of this committee was in February 2015; committee members approved staff/external partner recommendations to hire a branding firm for a project to research and help us plan a unifying brand for the City of Tempe. In March 2015, the full Council consented to allow the process to proceed to RFP.

We issued an RFP and pulled together a group of internal and external partners to evaluate responses. It was a larger group than is typical in Purchasing processes, but we wanted to include as many perspectives as possible. The evaluation committee should be commended for their dedication in critically evaluating and narrowing the initial 20 RFP responses, participating in a one-day session of interviews of four firms, and providing their expertise and perspectives during a process that has taken five months to complete. It is hoped that these evaluation committee members will continue their involvement in the branding process moving forward. Evaluation committee members were:

- Dan Dillon, Chief Marketing Officer, ASU
- Mary Ann Miller, Executive Director, Tempe Chamber of Commerce
- Stephanie Nowack, President and CEO, Tempe Tourism Office
- Kate Borders, President and Executive Director, Downtown Tempe Authority
- Greg Wolfe, Video Production Coordinator, City of Tempe
- Martha Garner, Web & Graphic Designer, City of Tempe
- Melissa Quillard, Public Information Officer, City of Tempe
- Nikki Ripley, Communication and Media Relations Manager, City of Tempe

Four finalists were interviewed in October 2015 -- two were from the Phoenix metropolitan area and two were out of state. By the end of the day, the committee decided to advance the two out-of-state firms, which displayed exceptional expertise and experience in branding. We asked follow-up questions of them and checked references. Ultimately, the evaluation committee unanimously supported moving one firm forward for the City Council's consideration at its Dec. 17, 2015, Regular Council Meeting. The committee believed the firm's extensive experience and thorough approach distinguished it.

Before taking a recommendation to the full Council, we wanted to loop back with the original Council committee to answer any questions and get additional feedback. While Purchasing indicates that we cannot name the recommended firm until the materials for Dec. 17, 2015, are released, we can discuss with the Council committee what we believe to be the merits and proposed approach of the recommended firm.

When considering the proposals submitted by all respondents, the recommended firm was in the middle of the pack in terms of price. It scored highest in the categories of 'credentials' and 'suitability to the

project.’ The recommended firm did not provide the lowest overall cost but would provide the highest value between the two finalists. The evaluation committee was able to distinguish between the proposals of the two finalists because the recommended firm's proposal included more quantitative research than the other firm's. The committee placed a high value on substantial quantitative and qualitative research in order to fully reveal the city's existing brand in the minds of its many audiences. Funding for the contract has been slated to be drawn from a fund originally established with Cox Communication dollars and long reserved for the use of the government access channel in particular.

As the committee knows, a brand is not a logo or tagline – those are expressions of the brand. A brand is the emotionally felt, motivating character of a product or, in this case, a place. Tempe’s brand is already felt in various ways by stakeholders, including residents, businesses and visitors. This process is about uncovering those impressions and solidifying/unifying them in order to create and maintain preference for Tempe as a place to live, do business and visit. We will arrive at recommended expressions of the brand and they will be based on the solid research and strategy developed with the consultant.

What happens now? If the City Council awards the branding contract next month, work would begin in early 2016 and take roughly 5-6 months. There will be many meetings with stakeholders including the Council, statistically significant surveys and research, brainstorming sessions and more. We intend to reach broadly into and outside of the community, and to continue the involvement of local stakeholders.

The end product will guide city communication activities for years into the future, since the essence of what is appealing and motivating about Tempe is not fleeting. Specific tactics are likely to change over time, however.

We are seeking to inform the Council committee at this time and get any feedback prior to the Regular Council Meeting.

For your information, below is the essential RFP language describing what we were seeking.

Required Services

A consultant’s help is sought for two main purposes: 1) to collaboratively devise a clear brand platform for the City of Tempe that strategically defines and capitalizes on the current and future attributes of our brand; and 2) to develop recommendations for creatively expressing the brand platform, with execution of tactics to be carried out by the city’s internal staff. The production of creative elements is not contemplated at this time as part of this RFP.

The contracted consultant will work with the city’s internal staff, City Council and external partners on activities that generally fall into these two categories and phases:

1) Conduct research-based brand audit and devise brand platform*:

- Define Tempe’s core values and strengths
- Identify target audiences and create profiles for each, including demographics, motivators, etc.
- Determine how Tempe is viewed by key audiences
- Develop a clear brand platform for the city that unifies diverse offerings and serves multiple purposes
- Analyze/evaluate the city’s current logo, website, social media and materials

2) Facilitate formulation of strategic communication plan:

- Assist in developing a citywide strategic communication plan with goals/objectives/tactics/measurements

- Establish key messages that resonate with audiences
- Recommend tactics to express the platform to audiences, possibly including a city tagline
- Recommend resources needed by the city to execute the platform internally

Regular meetings to discuss program status will be necessary.

** The term “brand platform” can have different meanings for different people. The city is looking for a platform that articulates the strategic destination of the brand and defines the visual and verbal articulation of that destination. It is not a positioning statement or a tagline or logo. It should be a long-term vision for where the brand is heading and where it should go. It should be unique and own-able for Tempe.*